

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 OPR-02 A-01 SY-05
OC-06 CCO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
OMB-01 TRSE-00 DOE-15 SOE-02 MCT-01 IO-13 /128 W
-----023913 192252Z /61

R 171147Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8424
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 4742

EO 11652: XGDS
TAGS: PINS, SHUM, IR
SUBJ: MAY 16 ANOTHER RELATIVELY QUIET DAY

REF: TEHRAN 4705

1. ONLY INCIDENT OF NOTE MAY 16 WAS ATTEMPTED DEMONSTRATION BY TEHRAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS FOR SECOND DAY IN A ROW. OCCASION WAS ANNIVERSARY OF DEATH OF ISLAMIC REFORMER ALI SHARIATI, WHOSE TEACHINGS ARE PARTICULARLY POPULAR AMONG MANY STUDENTS. IN KEEPING WITH CURRENT GOI POLICY, GROUP, WHO DID NOT HAVE A PERMIT TO DEMONSTRATE, WERE DRIVEN OFF OF CAMPUS BY POLICE AND SECURITY GUARDS, BUT SMASHED WINDOWS AT FACULTY OF DENTISTRY BEFORE BEING BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL. AS DAY BEFORE, THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN NO ARRESTS AND NO MAJOR INJURIES OR DEATHS.

2. AUTHORITIES ANNOUNCED 219 HAD BEEN ARRESTED OVER PAST FEW DAYS IN TEHRAN, OF WHOM 102 ARE IN PRISON AWAITING TRIAL, 77 HAVING CASES STILL BEING INVESTIGATED,
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29 REMANDED TO MINORS COURT, AND 6 TO BE TRIED BY MILITARY TRIBUNAL (NOTE: NUMBERS DO NOT ADD UP). PRESS SAYS LATTER 6 WERE CHARGED WITH DISTRIBUTING SUBVERSIVE LITERATURE; ANOTHER REPORT FROM JOURNALIST SOURCE IS THAT THEY WERE TRYING TO BLOW UP A PETROL STATION.

3. NO SERIOUS INCIDENTS REPORTED IN PROVINCIAL

CENTERS THOUGH TENSION REMAINS HIGH. TABRIZ STORES AND MANY SCHOOLS WERE CLOSED OR WITH LIMITED ATTENDANCE. AZARABADEGAN UNIVERSITY WAS CLOSED, AS WAS TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY IN ISFAHAN. VISITING NEW YORK TIMES CORRESPONDENT TELLS US HE COUNTED 42 TANKS IN CITY OF QOM. SEVERAL OTHER CITIES (HAMADAN, QAZVIN, KASHAN) LISTED IN PRESS AS QUIET WITH STORES GENERALLY CLOSED. EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT CONTINUE TO COME IN, INCLUDING UNIVERSITY FACULTY FROM MANY UNIVERSITIES. ONE EXCEPTION IS AZARABADEGAN UNIVERSITY FACULTY WHICH HAS POSED A SERIES OF DEMANDS TO THE CHANCELLOR THAT GENERALLY SUPPORT STUDENT POSITIONS. CONFERENCE OF CHANCELLORS FROM 20 UNIVERSITIES AROUND THE COUNTRY OPENED IN TEHRAN TODAY, MAY 17, FOR PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING CAUSES OF UNREST AND DISTURBANCES. SUCH CONFERENCES WILL TAKE PLACE EVERY TWO MONTHS, ACCORDING TO ANNOUNCEMENT IN PRESS. MEMBERS OF TEHRAN UNIVERSITY TEACHING STAFF HAVE ALSO SIGNED JOINT LETTER TO THEIR CHANCELLOR ASKING FOR REVERSAL OF TENTATIVE DECISION TO EXPEL SOME STUDENTS (THUS INDIRECTLY APPEARING TO SUPPORT STUDENT DEMONSTRATION MAY 15 WHICH WAS SPECIFICALLY FOR PURPOSE OF ASKING SAME THING).

3. MAJLES, TOON HAS BEEN DEBATING SITUATION, WITH MOST SPEAKERS EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR LAW AND ORDER. TABRIZ DEPUTY BANIAHMAD AND GOVERNMENT CRITIC
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PEZESHKPUR POSED USUAL CHALLENGING QUESTIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT.

4. COMMENT: SITUATION ON THE GROUND REFLECTS UNCERTAINTY AND AURA OF EXPECTATION WHICH GENERALLY PERVADES IRANIAN PUBLIC. PEOPLE, INCLUDING MANY IN THE ESTABLISHMENT, ARE TRYING TO FIGURE OUT EXACTLY WHAT GOI POLICY IS TOWARD DEMONSTRATORS AND PARAMETERS OF ANNOUNCED GOI CRACKDOWN, IN VIEW OF APPARENT WILLINGNESS OF THE GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUE DISCUSSION OF SOME PROBLEMS DEMANDS OF SHAH'S UNINTERRUPTED LIBERALIZATION POLICY.
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